THE

Nonconformists Plea

FOR THE

Conformists:

OR,

The Church of England

AND THE

Dissenters Reconciled.

Being som Arguments modestly offered, tending to Peace and Unitie; wherein is endeavoured to be Proved, That it is not Unlawful for those commonly called Nonconformists to hear Ministers of the Church of *England*.

Cleared by these 3. Propositions,

I. That it is no Sin. II. That it is a Duty. III. That it is a Matter (*at this Juncture*) of greatest Expediencie and on which the Præservation of the Protestant Religion very much dependeth, as utterly Defeating the Designs of the Romanists, who would divide us, and set us one to Ruin another for Trifles, that they mai Enslave us all to their Intolerabl and Detestabl Abominations.

LONDON, Printed for *James Cheak* And Sold by *Benj. Harris* at the *Stationers-Arms* and *Anchor* under the *Piazza* of the *Royal Exchange*, 1683.

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Letters of ſeveral Perſons upon the Peruſal of the Book, whoſe names the Author for ſome Reaſons, beſt known to himſelf, thought fit to conceal.

Mr. *C.*

I Thank you for the Sight of your Papers which I have Peruſed: your Deſign is Pious and Good, and your reaſons ſo firmly Linked together, by a very plain Method, that they may convince all but the obſtinate, and ſuch as hate to be Reformed. As they are now in Manuſcript, they will more Invite the particular Friends of the Diſſenting Party to Read them when in Print, becauſe they will come tendered to them, as your Private and Perſonal kindneſs, which will make way (If any thing will) through that Pride and Stomach, which is the Mother of their errors, and ſtands perpetually upon the Guard to Defend them. But I will not preſcribe to you the Method, that know much better than I do, the unhappy temper of this Party.

Wiſhing therefore all good Succeſs to your endeavour;

I reſt,

Your Aſſured Friend,

T. H.

I ſpeak nothing to diſcourage your Printing theſe Papers; for when you do Print them, *I deſire three or four Copies, to give in Charity to them that need*; but if before that you communicate them to ſome Friends of that Party in a Manuſcript, you ſhall ſee what they want to ſatisfie, where they will endeavour to make gaps, and where you may Strengthen your Fence; if it ſwell not to much more; for you may believe, that they that admit you to be their Chirurgion, will endure long your Lancet to this Impoſthume.

SIR,

IN these Divisions of the Church, I think nothing *more Pious and Prudent*, then the Studying and endeavouring of an *Union*; which I hope is the only design of this Treatise. The greatest Argument for the just Authority and Efficacy of the *English* Ministers *(which should be drawn from their Divine Ordination, and are urged against the Papists and other Secretaries)* are by the Author of this Treatise omitted, and that perhaps on purpose, and prudentially; and he hath chosen chiefly Arguments, *ad hominem*, grounded on the Principles and concessions of the *Nonconformists*, or some apparent mischiefs; and these I like very well, and hope they may have good effect to draw these to hear Truth: who oppose it now, because they never were taught it, or understood it. And to this design I heartily wish an Happy Success, and and shall afford my utmost assistance.

Yours,

T. H.

To the Unselfconceited and Uncontentious,

The Worthy and Learned E. H. *his Cordial and punctual Friend, and the presumed* Author, *or at least, the manifestly Ingennous, and Lovingly Laborious* Publisher of, *and the no less Pleasantly Facetious, and Piously Elaborate* Præfacer *to that New-Printed, World-amusing and Amazing, that pure Sublime, and Super-Seraphic Piece, Entituled,* Theologia Mystica, *or the Mystic Divinity of the Eternal Invisibles. A Work never Extant before.*

Honoured Sir,

IF any shall receive Benefit by the Publishing of these Arguments tending to Peace and Unity, either by easing their Consciences, inlarging their Minds, or securing their Liberty and worldly Interest, they must principally, if *not wholly*, be Indebted to you for it: Because though the same have been written several years past, yet had they utterly perished, *like an untimely Birth*, and never seen the light, *had not your hand been the Instrument of emitting*, or bringing it forth into the World: and therefore all the blame, base thoughts, worse wishes the Plea deserves, fall upon you, and let me be as freely dismissed, as was

Naaman

Naaman by him, who ſaid, *Go in Peace.* Now, if you think it will be *inquired, what Principles* doth this Authour hold as to *Points Fundamental,* or *neceſſary to Salvation.* The *Anſwer* is, that the judgment of Worthy Divines doth he acquieſce, *viz.* That the neceſſaries to Salvation are *few, plain, eaſie,* not difficult, or requiring much time to be learned; yet for want of time to write them, and room to place them here. He Summeth up his *Creed* into theſe following Heads, or Common Places.

1. He Profeſſeth the moſt Holy Trinity as the Object of Worſhip. 2. The Holy Scripture as the Rule of Worſhip. 3. A Heaven of Glory, or place of Eternal Bleſſedneſs, as the Reward of Worſhip. 4. The moſt Antient and beſt Reformed Church to be the fitteſt place of Worſhip, and to joyne to theſe four general Principles or Doctrines. In the 5. place, an active Faith upon Gods good promiſes. 6. A purifying hope of enjoying theſe. 7. A good and Innocent Life, according to the beſt Examples and Rules of Love and Charity; which things cannot be evident and certain where *true Repentance* is not. The Subject, I ſay, wherein theſe do Center, I believe to have a right to Gods Kingdom, and that he is and will be a joyful partaker of Eternal Salvation, even at the Reſurrection of the Juſt, and Eternal Judgment; of which number he unfeignedly deſireth to be found. Now for the Rules, or a Method to try and determine Principles or Doctrines by, he hath been accuſtomed to theſe.

I. That no Principle be admitted by a Religious mind, that doth interfere with the Divine Attributes, or perfections of the Almighty, ſuch as any way render him Inſipient in point of Wiſdom, Impotent in point of Power, or Cruel and Unmerciful in oppoſition to Love, Mercy, Kindneſs, and all good Nature.

II. That no Principle can be entertained as ſound, or worthy of aſſent in a pious Soul, that is repugnant to Reaſon properly ſo called; becauſe this being an Eternal Principle, and given by God to be, *as it were,* an Univerſal Oracle, or Guide to Mankind; it is not to be ſuppoſed that he ſhould eſtabliſh any thing repugnant or diſſonant to the ſame.

III. No Principle to be allowed, that contradicteth common and univerſal Experience. For if God be found to be every where, to fill all his own works, according to *Philoſophy,* and that there is no place where he is not, according to *Holy Scripture*; nay, that

that he is so near, as that every natural Species hath an immediate dependance upon him: If Man be an active Principle since the Fall by the Mercy of God, and undertaking of a Blessed Mediator; if Men find that they have Liberty and Power to do a Thousand things more than they do or have done, then to limit the *Holy One*, and to say he is here, but not there; to hold that *Man is a dead Principle*, not capable of Action and Motion, in respect of good as well as evil, lesseneth Gods Mercy, the largness of the Mediation, giveth the Lye, and contradicteth common and universal Experience, and so not to be held.

IV. No Principle to be received that fight the Scriptures, I mean make them fight one against the other, and excludeth an harmony in the whole: *For it is to be noted with a Mark in the Margin*, that where the Scriptures of Truth seem to contradict, it is only by reason of our darkness: Therefore we are to form nothing into stated Principles that doth unavoidably create a War in the *Sacred Record*, set at variance, and make discord, specially there where we are sure there must be a full concord, a most harmonious and perfect Unity, which will be easily discerned, when we shall obtain the Mercy *in his Light*, to see Light that was the Author of them.

V. That, as there is an undoubted Unity in the Holy Scriptures, so there is no less an entire Unity in all the Divine Attributes of the ever adorable and blessed Tri-um Deity. There is not Justice opposite to Goodness, Kindness, and Mercy; but these are all Justice, and Justice is all these, whatsoever the dark minds of Men may suppose, fancy, or imagine of any difference, contrariety, or opposition: And therefore some Men, though otherwise Godly and Learned, not so well considering, that whatsoever is essentially in God is one and the same, do sometimes represent God as divided in his Holy Attributes, as if his Mercy were to save what his Justice were to condemn, or as if there were two Wills in the Divine Essence, attributing that to God, which neither is, nor can be in Him, by this their so advancing one Attribute above or without another, which indeed is to destroy all.

Lastly, He asserteth that as all the Attributes are indivisible and inseparable in God, so do they all indivisibly and inseparably concurr in all his Actions and Administrations towards his Creatures.

Respected

Respected and Reverend Sir,

I shall give you no further trouble by the Enumeration of any more Principles, which would be but supernumerary, and therefore subjoyn only these few subsequent words, *viz.* That the Presumption of these Lines, you can and will, the more readily (so I perswade my self) pass by and Pardon, for as much as you have already candidly admitted and accepted this my (I may well say) home-spun, plain and mean, yet (I may, dare and must, as well say) honest, peaceful, and however, well-meant Plea from your *unenvious* acquaintance, unsuspected servant, and grant me the Honour also to add, what you, I know, will easily believe me to be,

Dear Sir,

Your unfeigned Friend,

J. C.

The Anſwer of *E. H.* to *J. C.* with ſom Adviſe to his Friends and Brethren in Chriſt our Lord.

Sir, and mi very loving, worthi, and good Friend,

I *Have ſafely and lately received your wel-drawn Lines, and re-joice therein to ſee, as amidſt your mani great aſſaults on everi ſide, your undaunted Reſolution; ſo amidſt no leſs, nor fewer worldis a"urements, the unearthli Spirit of your mind, which, I hope in God, wil more and more advance in* Divine knowledge; *the which in due time wil, and beſt of all can (I was about to ſai muſt) alone baniſh the* Evil Beaſt, *together with the* Whore, *and the* Anti-chriſt, *out of the* Heart *of man. Theſe all, undoubtedly, ſhal and muſt* Fall, *in whomſoever found, by the* hand *of Heaven, even by the Sword of God's Anger, that will be ſo ſharpned, as mightily to cut, even,* as it were, *aſunder both Bodie and Soul, in this time of* Divine Viſi-tation, *which certenly is neer and clearly at hand; no leſs aſſuredly, than the* Fire *with you in* Babel *kindling, ſhall burn and flame fiercely againſt you, and mee and everi one. Under and in which (maugre Men and Devils) if we abide and wait in* Divine Patience, *there wil be ſuch a Tranſmutation or Change, as that we ſhall all com forth, as fine as Gold, Gold ſeven times tried in the Fire.*

We ſhal do wel therefore to giv all Diligence, and our ſelvs to all Study, *how,* without Controverſie, *to make our Calling and Election ſure, and everi one of us to appli himſelf to* all earneſt ſinceritie, *and ſo much the more, (ſeeing great Warrs, Uproars and Inſurrections, Perplexities, Calamities and Death are coming, and wil in* a ſhort time, *be over all the Earth) heartily to ſeek and ſtrive, Faſt and giv Alms of thoſe things that we have, Prai and perſevere in Praier, and ſo faithfully prepare for, that wee may be ſafely defended in this* Great Tribulation: *for it cannot otherwiſe be, it is* neer, *and goeth on ſtrongly and ſwiftly; nai, is got among us, (tho too few have got a ſight of it) and is at preſent begun.*

This, Sir, out of the beſt preſence of mind and perfecteſt under-ſtanding, I am poſſeſſed with, I have apprehended requiſit, at this ſea-ſon, *for your Fratern Meditation and Chriſtian Concemplation, to be acquainted with: as likewiſe that I am wel,* ſo wel *ſatisfied in the ſuitableneſs, ſeaſonableneſs, and advantageouſneſs of making this diſ-*

courſ

cauſ Public, as to be abundantly content, *yea, willing, deſirous and* exceedingly Covetous *to bear (I was about to add,* ev'n *ambitious to Court) all the blame it deſerveth, how much ſoever it mai meet with. For being a Man, and* thro Mercie, *of Morals too, I find this Principle, among mani other, in me fixed, that is,* to mind Dutie alway, danger no way. *Conteſts, Cenſures, Croſſes; Il-will, Il-wiſhes, Curſes; or ani thing worſ, are litl, or next to nothing at all, to me: nai, the worſ, the better in a good cauſ. The World's* enmitie *is our* exaltration *in Chriſt, with whom to ſuffer, and to whoſe Image to be made, in Suffering, conformabl, ſhold not ſeem ſtrange to us, who at beſt, are here but ſtrange* Gueſts *in the World, going home to our Father's Houſ agen, or rather wandring in the Pilgrim's-Path toward our Nativ Countrie, that Heavenli One above.*

Yet, among all the varieties of entertainments *here* below, *this your late Papyr-One (you were pleaced to let me participate of) hath given me the leſs't perplexitie of thought, and minuteſt diſſatisfaction, or diſguſt. Nor can I imagin that it can ani waie poſſibl,* relliſh-ill, *but rather very* grateſull, *yea, prov highly* Palatabl *(and that without diſpute, if* Doctum Palatum *be the* Taſter) *for thoſe, tho few, yet delicious, curious, and choiſ Ingredients of that your Righteous, Sober and Godli* Belief, *that your Serious, Sincere and Chriſtian* Faith, *which you have ſo Frankly afforded me, in the foregoing Letter.* Sed Cynthius aurem vellit. *What of all this? Alos! where prejudice ſitteth Judg, what hopes hath the moſt Innocent, or rational Plea to be heard? what cure thereof to be had? There are ſom Froward Tempers that have an averſion from all ſorts of Phyſic, and which had rather continue* Blind *than uſe ani* Collyrium, *or* Eieſalv, *tho the very beſt, and tho offered with the greateſt Charitie imaginabl.*

Could I prevale with your Brethren who have hitherto been Nonconformiſts, *to lai aſide all Biaſs of mind and former Education, I would not deſpeir to ſee your Book productiv of very happi effects.*

I wold therefore beſeech them not to ſtumbl, leſs to ſtartl at it, becauſ haply it mai prov too great a Croſs to their Genius, *to their Prior Opinions, or to their Reputation. But to pauſ a while Calmly, judg Impartialy, and conſider ſeriouſly the* Arguments, *their coherence and cogence, and if thei find the* Præmiſſes *of force and value, not pertinaciouſly, or ſo much as paſſionately, to reject, or denie the* concluſion. *But (mi thoughts) I hear, Pride, Self-complacence, or vain glorie, begin to ſai, or however to* whiſper, *how*

I who have been a Nonconformist *these 20, these 30, or more years, and peradventure have had too, a Congregation of mi own, and have vehemently spoken likewise against hearing the Public Ministers and National Preachers, shal I? Such a Man as I, go to Church? Build what I have destroied? Raise up what I have Rased down? What wil the* Populo, *the many, the pay'r Multitude, who perhaps may have (at least some of them) long been my attentive Auditors) say and report of me? I Repli, do your duties, and what maketh most for the Peace of the Church, and let them say what they list. That Man maketh enough,* in all Conscience, *of his Credit, Reputation and Honour, who Sacrificeth it for the benefit of the Republic, the good of the Kingdom, the Public Interest of Christianitie. Nor can any but the* wretchedly weak, *or* wofully wilfull, *Calumniate, Scandalize, or Reproach you,* whose shame *it is to* withstand, *and, having done all, to* stand, *and that* out, *and* against *that, which can be no dishonour in the* less't, *namely, to hold Communion with a* Church, *wherein all the* Essentials (*to Speak most meanly of it, and in the lowest Degree*) *of* Faith *and* Worship *are Conserved entire and pure. Remarquable on this Subject are the* Words *of a compassionate, conscientious and Reverend Father of the Church, now Living, and thus speaking to and expostulating with the* Nonconformists.

You see, my Beloved in Christ, how earnestly I have pleaded for you to the Fathers and Governours of the Church, that they would graciously condescend to abolish some Ceremonies in the Church, that so they may receive you into it; but yet I have no great hopes that they will hearken to me. You your selves, for whom I plead, destroy my hope; For they presently dash me in the Teeth, *saying*, go rather and perswade the Sons in Duty to submit to their Fathers, then Fathers to yield to Sons; and can you deny but of the two you are rather to submit. You think to excuse this, by saying, were it not against your Conscience you would submit, but you dare not for fear of displeasing God: His Holy word forbids you. I beseech you shew me in his Holy word any one clear Sentence against any one Ceremony commanded in the Church. Shew me one such clear Text to excuse your *Nonconforming*, as I wil shew you for your *Conforming*. viz. *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man*, 1 Pet. II. 13. And again, *Obey them that have the Rule over you and Submit*. Heb. XIII. 17. These are as clear as the Sun, *why is your Conscience so bold against so clear*

clear a Text, and ſo Timerous on a doubtful Text? Is this Religion or Reaſon? Is this not apparently wilfulneſs? I beſeech you, my Brethren, take heed of thus diſſembling with God and the World, or take heed of giving your ſelf up to the deluſion of a miſtaken Spirit. Humilitie *and* Obedience *are evident Marks of the* Spirit. Learn of me, *ſaith Chriſt*, Mat. XI. 29. *For I am meek and lowly in Heart. God reſiſteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.* Wherefore I beſeech you, firſt put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt with all Humilitie, that he may giv you the Grace of his Holi Spirit, to diſcern theſe clear Truths from conceited and fanciſull Errors.

2. I do beſeech you conſider, whether of the two be not ſafer, to erre in the way of Humilitie, then to erre in the wai of Pride, which makes it doubly Damnabl, and void of all excuſe. Whereas the humbl Soul hath great excuſe to plead, and if *Charity cover a multitude of Sins*, ſurely *humilitie will cover ſom.* A Souſ clothed with humilitie cannot eaſily be diſpleaſing to an Humbl Saviour; but Clothed with Pride, can ſcarce be acceptabl but rather hateful, *like a Proud Phariſee*, with all his enumerated qualifications, and conceited virtues: And *mi Brethren*, 'tis evident, your Spirit ſavours ſomthing of the Phariſee, magnifying your own Holineſs and deſpiſing all others as *Publicans and Sinners*, and refuſing all Communion with them. Whereas the *Holi of Holits*, our Lord Jeſus, choſe chiefly to converſ with them.

3. I beſeech you to conſider the great miſchief yon bring upon this Church and Nation; You prætend to be great Zelots againſt Poperie, *yet giv* me leav to ſai, your indiſcreet and diſobedient Zele mainly let's it in.

Thus this peaceabl prudent and pious Prælate: *And to this his laſt* conſideration *I ſhall aſſume the Audacitie to add, that* whereas *nothing can now more Rejoyce the* Romaniſts, *nor cauſ a greater Jubilee in the Hearts of* Papiſts, *than to ſee the Major part of the* Proteſtants *in theſe Realms Totaly Rended, and utterly ruined for* Non-conformiſts; *ſo nothing on the contrari, can more directly tend, nor ſo much, to the diſappointing and finally fruſtrating their Helliſh and Devliſh Plots and Deſigns, as for all* Proteſtants, *of* what Denomination ſoever, *to Conform to the præſent Eſtabliſhed Church: Which would abſolutely and* without all peradventure *break all the Papiſts* præſent Meaſures, *and force them (if they attemt, and are ſo audacious as to attacque us) to do it* Unmaſqueraded *and* Bare-

faced

faced: *And which wold, undoubtedly, deprive and strip them of all aid and assistence from the* Protestant *partie of ani sort whatsoever. Nor shold we ani more do their Drudgerie, drive their Designs, Hit, or Aim at their Marks, or Advance their Interest, by destroiing one another; but all these hammers of Contention (with which the crafti and cruel Jesuits,* ev'n almost *knock us o'th-head, and, at ani time of their failure, set us to Box and Beat out one anothers Brains* Blindfold) *being broken and thrown away, we shold be united, firm and stanch, among our selvs, and appear to them terribl, as Armie with Banners. To conclude and consummate all, Self-Preservation, being the prime Principle in all Creatures, Rational and Irrational, as springing from the veri Fountain of Nature it self, shold in Nature and Reason Praponderate and over-Ballance ani other whatsoever considerations. Nor can it be* but observed, ev'n by *the meanest capacitie, that whatsoever is don to this purport and end, if it be not sinfully don, must of necessitie be Wisely don, and the undeniable product of Prudence; that so much commended, difficultly obteined, rare and incomparabl virtue.* Mai *the Almighti and the only and originaly Wise Beeing of Beeings, be so good and gracious to us, as to shew us the Effectual means, and most proper Expedients to prævent, obstruct, and utterly null and bring to nothing those numberless, Black, Dismal, and dreadfull Evils, which direly Frown upon, and miserably Threaten us; and, by His Blessing on your pains, render this Pious, Peacefull, prudent Treatise and Discours, usefull and serviceabl to so desirabl an end; and mai God afford his Grace and Favor in it, and grant everi Reader thereof to make good use of the same, and of this present Season and acceptabl Time, and to go forth out of the Fleshli Babel,* (it is high Time,) *and let everi one serch and examin himself, least hee be taken in it, and so partake unavoidably of its Plagues. The Lord God, who wold have all Men come to the knowledg of the Truth and be saved, keep you and your, us and our, even all Men, Women and Children, in Grace by His Blessed knowledg of Jesus Christ in us: To the Patience, Meeknes, and Lov of whom, I commend the Catholic Church, ev'n the whol* Israel *of God, and in whom I am,* Sir,

Your readi and real Friend,

Idem Qi pridem,

Cuiq; nomen Christianus,

Co nomen Catholicus.

THE

THE *Nonconformists Plea for the Conformists*, OR THE *Church of* England *and the Dissenters* RECONCILED:

Proving that it is not Unlawful to hear Ministers of the Church of *England*: Because

1. *It is no* [redacted].
2. *It is a Duty.*
3. *It is of highest Expediency.*

Being Resolv'd in this brief Discourse, to stick to Matter and Argument, without flourishes of words, I shall wave all Preamble, and immediately address my self to the business, of making good the three Propositions abovementioned.

AND for the First, *That it is no sin to hear some Ministers of the Church of England*, be pleased to take the Arguments.

1. That which is not Repugnant to any Law of God, either *Moral* or *Positive*, is no sin.

But to hear Ministers of the Church of *England* Preach and Pray, is not Repugnant to any Law of God, either *Moral* or *Positive*, *Ergo*, it cannot be a sin.

The *Major* I think none will deny, it being founded upon that undeniable and Universally received Maxim, *That where there is no Law, there is no Transgression.*

The *Minor* is only to be made good, which we shall endeavour to do: First, by proving that it is no sin against any *Moral* Law. Secondly, that it is no sin against any *Positive* Law of Almighty God. That it is no sin against any *Moral* Law, we thus prove.

2. That which is not Evil in its own Nature, cannot be a ſin againſt a *Moral* Law: But

To hear ſome Miniſters of the Church of *England* Preach and Pray, is not Evil in its own Nature, *Ergo*, it cannot be a ſin againſt a *Moral* Law.

The *Major* I think none will deny, the *Minor* we thus make good.

3. If it be not an Evil in its own Nature to hear Bad men Preach, or repeat good things, Then

It cannot be an Evil to hear Good men do ſo, (of which there are many in the Church of *England*.)

But it is no Evil in its own Nature to hear Bad men Preach, or repeat good things, *Ergo*, it cannot be an Evil to hear good men do ſo.

The *Major* I think is unga[illegible]yable, unleſs the Firſt-born of Abſurdities it ſelf ſhall be affirm'd, Namely, that a Good man may not do ſo much good in the beſt and higheſt duties of Religion, *viz.* Preaching and Praying as a Bad man may.

The *Minor* we prove from the words of our bleſſed Saviour, Matt. 23. 1. 2. *The Scribes and Phariſees ſit*, &c. *Whatſoever they Bid you obſerve and do, that do.* None can deny but theſe were Bad men, yea moſt egregiouſly Bad men, and yet our Saviour directs his Diſciples to hear them; yea, and to Conform to their Doctrine too, but decline their Example, from whence this Argument doth moſt Naturally and Congruouſly ariſe for the ſtrength of the *Minor* propoſition.

4. That which the Diſciples had our Saviours full and plain direction for, cannot be an *Evil* in its own Nature: But

To hear *Bad* men Preach, Read, or proclaim good things, they had our Saviours full and plain direction, *Ergo*, it cannot be an *Evil* in its own Nature.

In this laſt Argument, I think both *Major* and *Minor* ſhines ſo clear, that no oppoſition will dare to Face it; or in the leaſt to ſuppoſe that our bleſſed Saviour did give a full direction to do that which was in its own Nature ſinful; in which lies the ſtrength of the *Major* propoſition. For the *Minor*, it is made ſo ſtrong by the expreſs words of the Text, that (as one ſays in another caſe,) its like *a King upon his Throne, againſt whom there is no Riſing up.*

5. And that it is no *Evil* in its own Nature, give us leave a little further to Illuſtrate. If

If it be no *Evil* in its own Nature for ſome Miniſters in the Church of *England* to Preach and Pray, then, it can be no *Evil* in its own Nature for *Nonconformiſts* to hear them; but it is no *Evil* in its own Nature for ſome Miniſters of the Church of *England* to Preach, and Pray, *Ergo*, it cannot be an *Evil* in the *Nonconformiſts* to hear them.

The *Major* is grounded upon that good Old Maxime, *like Cauſes produces like Effects*: Now if it be good in the Principal Agent, it cannot be *Evil* in the *Encourager* or *Confederate*: The Reaſon is, becauſe to Encourage that which is *Good*, or to combine with it, can be no *Evil*. Now, to ſuppoſe that an Action is good in its ſelf, and yet to ſuppoſe that a joyning with that Action is *Evil* in the Abettor, is a contradiction.

6. To make good the *Minor*, namely, that it is no *Evil* in the Miniſters before intended, to Preach and Pray, take this Argument. If the Preaching and Prayers of ſome Miniſters of the Church of *England* be good for *Matter*, Right in *Form* or *Manner*, pious in the *Deſigne*, and profitable in their *Effects*, then they cannot be *Evil* in their own Nature in point of performance?

But the Preaching and Prayers of ſome Miniſters of the Church of *England* are good for Matter and Manner, in the Deſignes and Effects; *Ergo*, they cannot be Evil in point of performance, the Reaſon is, becauſe there is in this Enumeration of Particulars, all things that ſhould conſtitute an Action to be good, 1. Here's Righ Matter, 2. Here's Right Form, 3. Here is a good Deſign, 4. Here is good Effects.

7. The *Minor* we are here to make good, by ſhewing that the Preaching and Prayers are ſo, though the truth is, this is a needleſs task, conſidering how many Sermons are in Print both from the City of *London*, and divers places in the Country, that do make good the *Minor* beyond all contradiction, yet becauſe we would not be wanting to ſo good a Cauſe, let Superfluities once paſs uncontemned: Firſt then,

1. Some Miniſters of the Church of *England* in their Preaching do make uſe of the written Word of God as the Matter, and of a very grave and well Compoſed Method as the Manner; and this they do out of a very good Deſigne, as appears by theſe three conſiderations, 1. They do it zealouſly, 2. They do it conſtantly, 3. They expoſe themſelves to danger by ſo doing from the *Romiſh*

Party; and for the clearing of all these, let but the Sermons of the many Famous *English* Doctors and Bishops be perused, and they shall afford an over-plus satisfaction. Now, that they have been profitable in their Effects, to make men seriously fear God, to be affected with the Religion of the blessed *Jesus*, to adhere to *Protestant* cause, and abominate *Popery*, we could bring great Clouds of witnesses to confirm it? For these things have not been done in a Corner, but are Notoriously known to the whole Kingdom, *&c.* Therefore we shall proceed to another Argument.

If it be not an Evil in its own Nature, to hear the *Nonconformists* Preach, and say their Prayers to Almighty God, Then

It can be no such Evil to hear some Ministers of the Church of *England* do so. The reason lieth here, because they Preach the same God, the same Christ, the same Scripture, the same Faith, the same good Works, the same Places of Rewards and Punishments, upon the same Terms, that the *Nonconformists* do.

But it is no Evil in its own Nature to hear a *Nonconformist* Preach the true God, the Religion of the blessed *Jesus*, the Divine Authority of the Scripture, the necessity of Faith and good Works, a Heaven for the Godly, and a Hell for the ungodly after this Life, *Ergo*, its no sin to hear the Ministers of the Church of *England* do so. *Moses* doubtless was of this mind, *when He wisht that all the Lords People were Prophets*; and our blessed Saviour also, who would not forbid those that set Forth his Name, although they did not Associate with his Immediate followers: And the Apostle St. *Paul* without all peradventure was of the same mind with *Moses* and his great Master (*Jesus Christ*,) who told the great Body of the Believers at *Corinth*, that they might all Prophesie, provided it was but in Order and not in Confusion. And declar'd that he rejoyced to hear that Christ was Preached, although it was done by some out of an Evil intent.

Obj. And if the *Nonconformist* should meet me here with this Objection, *viz.* That we do not in the least disallow the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, but do readily and freely accord with it, but that which makes us scrupulous, and think its an undoubted sin to hear them, may be reduc'd to these two heads.

1. That their Institution or Induction, or way of coming into the Ministry, is not warrantable and Evangelical.

2. That the use of the *Surplice* and *Common-Prayer* we think unlawful: Well,

For

For Brevity sake admit all this to be true: (Though we shall reserve to our selves a time more largly to discourse them, if any shall attempt to urge them against us in Print) yet this doth not conclude the Question to make it an Evil in its own Nature to hear them; For its possible that some Actions and Circumstances of a mans Life may not be so square and Authentique as the Law of God requires, yet this doth not make it a sin in his Children and Servants, to hear him read to them good Lectures of Moral vertue, or to Administer grave and seasonable advice to them, for their better regulating their Lives here, and the obtaining a blessed Immortality hereafter.

Will any of the *Nonconformists* dare to say, that in case their Fathers, or Masters, are not perfect themselves, it is then a sin in all the rest of their Families to hear them Administer that which is Savoury and good, both for Body and Soul; If any shall be so Wild as to say so, he shall have the Name of a *Phanatick* by an Universal vote. But further,

Upon the same *Hypothesis* it must be a sin to here the *Nonconformists*, and if it be an undoubted sin to hear both *Conformists* and *Nonconformists*, what shall we do then? Where shall we flie for rest, and where shall we fix our Glory? and that it is a sin to hear the *Nonconformists*, upon the same ground, we Argue from their own Principles, for thus they say, though the Ministers of the Church of *England* do Preach and Pray well, yet there is a default in the way of their coming to the Ministry, because the way and manner of their Institution is not Evangelical, and the same they may say of us; for there is no less a default in the way and manner of the *Nonconformists* coming to the Ministry; nay, there is a far greater default, for the Ministers of the Church of *England*, have an order that at least carries some Resemblance of the Primitive Institution, but the *Nonconformists* have no Order at all, especially the generallity of the Mechanical Preachers in that way; for either they leave their *Callings* and Concerns of their Families, and Run up and down Preaching of their own Heads, upon a Fanciful supposition, that they are able to Preach, or else at most, have but the consent and connivance of a few weak Persons like themselves, who are altogether *Incompetent Judges* in such a weighty case. The case being truly thus (as we are able to make it good) the controversie resolves it self into this Question,

which

which is guilty of the greatest default in coming to the Ministry, they that observe a constant Order, somewhat resembling the Primitive Pattern, or they that observe no Order at all, and wholly loose all the Foot-steps of the Antient Church in that case, and loosly make void all Cannons of Holy Scripture, provided to Regulate and set upright therein. I durst undertake upon a Sober Debate (with my Brethren the *Nonconformists*) to make it good, That, that loose kind of way made use of by them, is above measure more Intollerable and Inconvenient then that of the *Church of England*, and that too, if we should grant their Sense upon the case, that their Institution is not Evangelical, but this perhaps may be a preparatory to a further debate; and therefore for brevity sake we shall leave it, and come to the Second part of the Objection, which is, *The use of the Surplice and Common-Prayer*, In answer to this, we say, *That admit this as the former, not to be Evangelical, it doth not conclude the Question, viz. That therefore it is a Sin to hear them that do so*; my Reason for it arises out of the *Nonconformists* own Principles, and that I make it appear thus; many Ministers of the *Nonconformists* do make use of the *Singing Psalms*, and *Baptizing* of Children, which great numbers of *Nonconformists* call *Hopkins's Songs*, and *Sprinkling of Babes*, and most *Nonconformists* in *England* do account both *Preter-Evangelical*. Now if it be a Sin to hear the one upon this Ground, then it roundly follows from our own Principles, that it is a Sin to hear the other; and I may no more hear those that are for *Singing and Sprinkling*, then I may hear the other that are for the use of *Surplice and Common-Prayer*.

From whence we advance to the Second part, and say, *That if it be a Sin to hear some Ministers aforesaid, 'tis made so by some Positive Law, but it is not made a Sin by any Positive Law*; *Ergo*, It is no Sin to hear them; the *Major* is sufficiently cleared by the President Discourse, the *Minor* we clear up by this following Argument.

That which Men had our Saviours plain and full direction for, and that was not countermanded by any *Ministerial Edict*, Subsequent thereunto, can be no Sin by any Positive Law: but to hear Men much differing from us (or not under half so good circumstances as the Ministers of the Church of *England*) in the Administration of Good, Men had our Saviours plain and full

directi-

direction, and it was not countermanded afterwards; *Ergo*, It cannot be a Sin by any Positive Law.

The *Major* I think none will deny, unless they will make our Blessed Saviour the Author or Abettor of Sin; the *Minor* we make good by this Argument thus: First, that our Saviour did give such a direction, is plain from *Mat.* 23. 1, 2. And Secondly, that it was never countermanded by any Publick or Ministerial Edict, afterwards is proved by this following Argument.

If the aforesaid direction of our Saviour was countermanded by any Ministerial Edict afterwards, it may be made appear by the Doctrine of Christ himself, or his immediate Successors; But neither the Doctrinh of Christ himself nor his immediate Successors, do make it appear, *Ergo*, it was not countermanded afterwards; the reason of the *Major* is, because none but they had Power to countermand that direction; the *Minor* must be Assaulted, if any Servce done for the cause impleaded; therefore for the Strength and Relief of that against all opposition, take this Argument.

If the Apostles declared the whole Council of God; and no where declared our Saviours direction, in that case to be unlawful or countermanded, then it was not done, but the Apostles did declare the whole Council of God, and no where declared that direction to be unlawful or countermanded, *Ergo*, it was not done.

2. *Arg.* That which is not to the Dishonour of God, discommodious to the Souls of Men here, nor hazzardous of their Salvation hereafter, can be no Sin by any *Positive Law*.

But to hear some Ministers of the Church of *England*, is neither to the dishonour of God, discommodious to the Souls of Men here, nor hazzardous to their Salvation hereafter; *Ergo*, It cannot be a Sin by any *Positive Law*; the *Major* is as Transparent as the Street of *Jerusalem*; the *Minor* we thus make good.

3. *Arg.* If the constant care and common Practise of some Ministers of the Church of *England*, in their Preaching and Prayers, be to Establish and Defend all the necessary Articles of the Christian Religion, and annex thereunto a good Example in their Lives; then it is not to the dishonour of God, discommodious to the Souls of Men here, nor hazzardous of their Salvation hereafter to here them; but the constant care, and common Practise of some Ministers aforesaid is so; *Ergo*, it can be no dishonour to God, nor injurious to the Souls of Men here or hereafter to hear them.

If

If the *Nonconformists* require satisfaction about the Truth of the *Minor* proposition in this Argument, let them but Read the several Sound and Savory works of the Godly Learned of the Church of *England*, both Deceased and now Living, that might be named, and they shall meet with heaped measure running over to a good over-plus, *&c.*

4. *Arg.* If some Ministers of the Church of *England* do Preach the true Faith of the Gospel as clearly as any others, together with the necessity of a good Life, in order to a Blessed Immortallity, then it can be no Sin, nor hazzardous of Salvation to hear them, but 'tis evident to the whole Kingdom, that they do so; *Ergo*, and for any to say it is a Sin to hear them before it is proved so, is great boldness and presumption; and to say 'tis hazzardous of Salvation, is harsh, uncharitable, and injurious to the Souls of Men; and therefore I think it a good way, where any weak Souls have been kept in Bondage by these groundless slights and Projects, to a constant adhering to a Bald, Barren, and confused Ministry, that they now do free themselves, and endeavour to find out a Good, Grave, and Learned Minister, that may ease their Consciences of groundless Burthens and perplexing Scruples that others have cast upon them, and shew them the way of God more plainly and clearly then ever they saw it yet, *&c.*

5. *Arg.* That which the Apostle St. *Paul* Practised himself, and gave an Apostolical tolleration for others so to do, can be no Sin by any *Positive Law*: but the Apostle St. *Paul* did himself hear national or publick Ministers, though they was of the *Mosaik* dispensation, and gave tolleration for others to do so; *Ergo*, it can be no Sin by any *Positive Law*; the *Major* I think will be uncontradicted, the *Minor* is cleared by these following Texts, *Acts* 13. 14. 15. 1 *Thes.* 5. *chap.* 15, 20, 21. *ver.* 1 *John* 4. 1.

6. *Arg.* We give from the *Nonconformists* own good old Principles, and so we shall dismiss this first proposition, namely, that it is no Sin; to proceed then, 'tis the Stated Principles of the *Nonconformists*, and hath been held by them these many years, that it is lawful to hear a good Man Preach and Pray, though he differ in some things from us: from whence this Argument naturally arises.

If some Ministers of the Church of *England* be good Men, then it is lawful for us to hear them: But,

Some

Some Miniſters of the Church of *England* are ſo, *Ergo*, the *Major* is our own principle, the *Minor* is thus proved.

Thoſe that Preach good Doctrine, and live good lives, are good men, but ſome Miniſters of the Church of *England* do ſo, *Ergo*, This Argument carries ſo much ſelf evidence a long with it, I think none will deny it; but if any ſhall appear to do it, we will make it good hereafter, and now come to the Second head, *viz.* that it is a Duty to hear them.

1. *Arg.* It is a Duty to hear a true Miniſter of the Goſpel, but ſome Miniſters of the Church of *England* are ſo, *Ergo*, 'tis a Duty to hear them: The *Major* is out of the compaſs of all controverſie, for there is none that make a doubt of its being a Duty to hear a true Miniſter of the Goſpel; The *Minor* we know we ſhall be put to prove, *viz.* That ſome Miniſters of the Church of *England* are true Miniſters, we undertake to Demonſtrate it by theſe three things.

1. That they have all the Signs of true Miniſters that this Age admits, or is capable of.

2. They are under the ſame circumſtances to the higheſt Degree that others were under, who were accounted true Miniſters in former times.

3. If they are not true Miniſters, there is no true Miniſters in this Age.

For the clearing up of the firſt of theſe, we premiſe that there are four Signs or qualifications that do repreſent Perſons to be true Miniſters, 1. *Ability*, 2. *Authority*, 3. *Action* or performance, 4. *Succeſs*.

Ability conſiſts chiefly in two things, 1. *Underſtanding*, 2. *Utterance*; in both theſe reſpects, ſome Miniſters of the Church of *England* may juſtly challenge an equallity, if not a preheminency with any party that pretends to Religion, for the proof of this let their Works witneſs for them in the Gate, which are to be ſeen in the many worthy Treatiſes that have been written by them againſt *Atheiſm*, *Popery*, *Hereſie*, and *Immorality*, and if any diſſenting Party can produce ſo many better and more Learned works againſt all theſe Enormities then what they have made extant, we will give the cauſe; now why ſuch worthy Patriots and Defenders of the Chriſtian Religion ſhould be ſlighted, contemned, and rejected by People that pretend to the ſame thing, I want

 yet

yet a Perſon to ſatisfie me (who am my ſelf a *Nonconformiſt*, and have been ſo train'd up from my Child-hood) and as touching their Authority (to ſet a ſide now the conſtitution of the Kingdom and the ſtamp of Humane power,) I do affirm, that they have as good a Divine Authority as any others in the Land beſides; for if we lay a ſide the power of Humane Laws and National conſtitutions, we muſt then betake our ſelves to a Scripture Warrant, for further then this, there is no party that is Sober, and in their right minds do pretend; now, upon a ſuppoſition that they have Ability (in point of underſtanding and utterance to Preach well) the ſame Scripture Rule and Warrant is of as good Authority to them as it is to any others, whether it be the General Commiſſion of our Saviour to all his Servants Indefinitely, which bids them, Luk. 19. 13. *Occupy till He comes.* Or whether it be the General Toleration of the Apoſtles, *Peter* and *Paul*, the one of which ſaith, 1 Pet. 4. 10. 11. *As every man hath received the Gift, ſo let him Miniſter as a good Steward.* The other ſaith to Chriſtians in General, 1 Cor. 14. 31. *That they may all Propheſie*, provided it be in Order; now why any Party ſhould appropriate this Scripture-Commiſſion or Tolleration to themſelves, and ſhut the Miniſters of the Church of *England* out, who are Chriſts Servants as well as they, and Chriſtians in Common as well as they, I ſee no Reaſon to ſatisfie me, and do believe that none can Aſſign any that will be ſufficient, and therefore conclude that the Commiſſion given by our Bleſſed Saviour to all his Servants, to improve their Tallents till he comes, doth in as good right belong to the Miniſters of the Church of *England*, becauſe they are his Servants, as to any other of his Servants upon the Face of the Earth; and then conſequently they have as good a Divine Authority as the preſent Age and diſpenſation we live in is capable of. And as touching Action and performance: Firſt, they Preach the ſame God, the ſame Chriſt, the ſame Scripture, the ſame Doctrine of life and Salvation, the ſame final ends of Well and Evil doing, as the beſt *Nonconformiſts* do, and this they do zealouſly and conſtantly, and we have ground to believe very Piouſly, and this they have done with Bleſſed ſucceſs, as Thouſands can witneſs, that their Miniſtry hath been a Bleſſed means to put a ſtop to the growth of *Atheiſm*, *Popery*, *Hereſie* and *Immorality*, and to lay good Seeds and Grounds of Religion and Piety in the hearts and

and minds of Men, all which I think there is no Ingenious men of my Brethren the *Nonconformists*, will or can deny; from these premises therefore I draw this Conclusion or Argument; That

If some Ministers of the Church of *England* have all the Signs and Characters of true Ministers that this Age admits of, or any other true Ministers have; then they are true Ministers, but they have so, *Ergo*; and further we may add, that if some Ministers of the Church of *England* do clearly and ungainsayably Preach the Truth in all the main and substantial parts of the Gospel, then they are in that respect true Ministers; but some Ministers of the Church of *England* do so, *Ergo*, some Ministers of the Church of *England* are true Ministers. And

Now we are come to the second Consideration, that they differ not from others that have been accounted true Ministers in former times; by others, we mean those Blessed men that suffered in the *Marian* days, who are in this Age accounted true Ministers by the most zealous of our *Nonconformists* Brethren, that is to say, *Cranmer*, *Ridly*, *Philpot*, *Taylor*, and the like: Now these being good men and good Preachers, are by our *Nonconformists* accounted true Ministers with a notwithstanding to their Episcapal Ordination, Habiliments, and National standing, and some of our zealous Brethren give us to believe, that if they were here again, they would hear them, although they were Ordained by a Bishop, wore a *Surplice*, and read *Common-Prayer*, but how shall we believe that our *Nonconformists* have such a sincere Reverence for those good men that are dead, as to account them true Ministers, and do profess, that if *they were alive again, they would love them and hear them, when they do disdain and reject those now alive that are under the same Circumstances* and predicament as they were, *and that in all cases, their Martyrdom only excepted*, which is not Essential or Relative of their being good men or true Ministers; for if they were *such*, they were so before their *Martyrdom*, and as such they ought to have been owned before that, were those mens Hearts sound, or were they true to their own Principles, that said, (*If we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would not have persecuted the Prophets as they did*;) they were great admirers of the Prophets, and Garnished their Sepulchers, but yet they Persecuted the same kind of men that were then alive with as bad usage as their Fathers did them that were dead.

What therefore shall we say, or think of our *Rigid Nonconformists*, who Magnifie the Martyrs at a high rate, and very generously buy up their Monuments, and look on them every day, and yet trample upon Men of the same Rank that are now alive with great disdain, as though some circumstances that they were under then, are altogether inconsistent with a Christian or a Minister now; so that those that use them, can be none of these, *viz.* neither Christian nor Minister, but to such *Zealots*, I will leave this Argument to consider of.

If the Martyrs in Queen *Marys* days were true Ministers of Christ, then those under the same predicament with them (their Martyrdom only excepted) are true Ministers now; but the Martyrs in Queen *Marys* days were so, *Ergo*, Men of the same Rank and order now, are so likewise.

Thirdly and Lastly, If some Ministers of the Church of *England* be not true Ministers, then there are no true Ministers in this Age; the Reason of it is,

1. *Because they have as good an Understanding as any*
2. *As good an Utterance as any*
3. *As good a Divine Right to Preach as any*
4. *They Preach as good Doctrine as any*
5. *They are as constant in their Work as any*
6. *They do as much good by their Preaching as any*

} others.

And if all these will not dignifie and Intitle them to be true *Ministers*, they will not Intitle others to be so, and then the consequence follows.

If some Ministers of the Church of *England* have all the Signs and Characters that any others have to prove or pretend themselves true Ministers by, and yet are not true Ministers, then there is no true Ministers in this Age, but some Ministers of the Church of *England* have so, *Ergo*, now let our Antagonists tell us, whether they themselves be true Ministers, or not so.

If it be not so upon the foregoing Supposition, there is a dangerous precipice before us, for then none are so; and if they be, the conclusion of the first Argument stands good, that it is a duty to hear them, because they are so, *&c.*

2. *Arg.* That which is commanded by the Government under which we Live, and is no Sin against the Soveraignty of Almighty God, is a Christians undoubted duty.

But

But to adhere to such Ministers aforesaid, is so commanded; and is no Sin against Divine Soveraignty, *Ergo*, 'tis an undoubted Duty; the *Major* we prove from plain Scripture, *Rom.* 13 1. *Titus* 3. 1. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. *&c.*

The *Minor* consists of two parts, *viz.* First, that the Government requires it. Secondly, that 'tis no Sin against Divine Soveraignty: The first part is proved by the Law of the Land, The Second is proved by the foregoing Argument.

3. *Arg.* That which undeniably Suits and Satisfies the Government under which we Live, being no Sin as aforesaid, is all Subjects duty.

But such an adhering contended for, undoubtedly Suits and Satisfies the Government, *Ergo*; the *Major Proposition Shines forth like the Sun in his Strength by the Light of these considerations.*

1. If it be our duty to Pray for the Magistrates, that we may satisfie them and live Peaceably under them, 'tis no less our duty to do other Lawful Actions in order to the same end; this I think none will deny.

2. If it be our duty to follow peace with all Men, the Magistrate is undoubtedly comprehended, and may justly claim a preheminency in that Object of our Souls Pursuit.

3. If it be our duty to serve all Men in all things, Honest and Lawful, and not to please our selves, let any Man shew me a reason why the Magistrate is here to be excluded? shall the place of his Power shut him out from a priviledge common to all other Men, then it must needs be the worst of Stations to be in places of Power, and the greatest of Plagues that can be thrown upon the Sons of Men, and the Masters of a Kingdom, a Province, or Country, are in a far worse condition then the Master of Private Families, for their Servants are indispensibly tyed by Divine Precepts to Suit, Satisfie, and please their Masters in all things not injurious to Almighty God, and not only so; But

4. The great Scripture Argument of Suiting and endeavouring to please, because they are Supream, is wholly enervated and made void.

5. And Lastly, the great example of our Blessed Saviour and his great Apostle St. *Paul*, is directly thwarted, the one conform'd to a human Edict, because the Power commanded, and least he

should

should give offence; the other became all things to all Men, and in some things Relating to an Abrogated Worship too, that he might Suit, Satisfie, and gain upon them, which Example, we are tyed by a *Canon Apostolical* to follow, if we profess our selves Christians or Servants of Christ.

The *Minor* is so clear of it self, that it would be like the holding a Candle to the Sun to enter upon the Proof of it.

4. *Arg.* That which frees the Magistrate from much trouble and discontent, and is in it's own Nature no Sin, is our undoubted Duty, but such a compliance contended for doth this, *Ergo*, 'tis a Duty. The *Major* is made good from that Precept, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. 32. *Give no Offence neither to* Jew *nor* Greek, *nor to the Church of God.* Now where there is a groundless creating of Troubles and Discontents to our Superiours, there is doubtless a bringing of guilt to *Satans* Mill, and a Transgressing of this Divine Precept.

Obj. If any should here Object, that it is the Magistrates error and weakness, to be troubled and discontent about matters relating to Religion, and therefore it is a Sin to comply with him in his error and weakness: In Answer to this we say first,

Sol. 1. 'Tis very great boldness so to conclude on the very first onset, and those that do so, are certainly very high and lofty in their minds, that they will take upon them so hastily to judge the Actions of their Superiours, *And that too before a fair and equal Tryal*: and if these peremptory dictators were in higher places, 'tis doubted that they would bring forth more prodigious off-springs: But

Secondly, We say it is no error or weakness in a Father, or Master of his Family, to endeavour to bring his weak Servants and Children to an adherency, to the more Strong, Wise, and Prudent of his Family; and this, as the Face of things now is, is the very true State of the case. We do say, though the *Nonconformists* may be Honest and well-meaning People, yet for the most part of them they are far below some Ministers aforementioned, both for Learning, Parts, Prudence, Pollicy, yea, and Piety too; and therefore to endeavour to bring the weak to be taught, instructed, and helped by the Stronger and Wiser, is no error, and consequenty a trouble, for being gain-said and disappointed therein, no weakness: But

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Admit it were such as the bold Objector Suggests, *viz.*, error and weakness in the Magistrate to be troubled and discontented, (as it is possible for a Magistrate to erre) yet a compliance therein would not be Sin.

First, Because the thing desired, is not so in it's own Nature, as hath been proved.

Secondly, Because if the contrary Party should think themselves wiser and stronger at this turn then their Superiours, and those that are retainers unto them, the bold Objectors conclusion would not follow: in as much as the strong are bound to bear the Infirmities of the weak, and by Love as well as Obedience, to serve one another, and the Apostle thought it no Sin to comply with the weakness of some ordinary Christians, as might be manniest by many Instances, and seeing the controversie is come to this, I do demand whether the Magistrate may not claim some Privilege from that Divine Injunction, (let them that are strong bear the Infirmities of the Weak) as well as others of an Inferiour Rank, and here let me put a case; If I do go to hear some Publick Ministers, it will offend some of the most Inconsiderable of the *Nonconformists*, if I do not, it will offend the Magistrate, and many others of the Publick way; now I am come to this dilemma, if I do not go, I neglect my duty, and offend the weak, if I do go, I do my duty, and offend the weak; which I Pray now shall I chuse. I shall therefore in Pursuit of my task go on to another Argument.

5. *Arg.* That which best secures the Interest of the whole, and all particulars in the State, is Christians undoubted duty, but such a complyance contended for will do so, *Ergo*, 'tis a duty; the *Major* is clear from all Rules, Sacred and Civil, and no Man in his right mind once doubts that it is the duty of the Members to secure and preserve the body Pollitick, and consequently their own Interest. The *Minor* clears up like a Morning without Clouds, by the help of these three considerations. First, 'tis a thing that the Publick Magistrate will to a good degree rest satisfied in. Secondly, 'tis that, that the Publick Ministers will do so likewise. Thirdly, 'tis that, that the whole Body of the commonalty will acquiesse in, as a good expedient for Peace and Unity, which is the ground, Foundation, and basis of common and Universal security, according to the Sence of our Saviour himself,

who

who concludes, that *a House divided within it self is eminently obnoxious to danger.*

Now, there is no sensible Man can deny, but that which these three great Interests shall (to a good degree) rest satisfied in, tends much to prevent Feuds, Contentions, and Animosities at home, and to put our Enemies under discouragement and desperation abroad (and in these two things under God, lyeth the security of a State) and the *Truth is, Peace and Unity is so great a Duty, not only because it brings security to a State, but it is made so by so many Divine Instances, that it may be wondred at,* that People pretending to Religion, and the Honour of God, should Study and strive to promote it no more; it was that good Man *Josephs* care to caution his Brethren, *That they did not fall out by the way.* Abraham tells Lot, *There was a Relation betwixt them, and they ought not to differ;* The Psalmist *calls upon others to take notice how good and lovely a thing it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity*: Our Saviour Preaches it clearly, by telling of us, *That a Kingdom divided cannot be safe*: The Apostle requires Christians *To seek the Good one of another, to follow after the things that make for Peace, not to judge one another, nor Quarrel about Trifles and things of no Moment, as Eating and Drinking, observing of Days, washing of Vessels, (wearing of Garments)* &c. And to shew the conveniencies of a moderate compliance and charitable condescention, would take up more Room and Time, then conveniency will at present admit off; To be short therefore,

1. It will much undermine, if not wholly enervate the Evils of *Hard Surmisings, Contentions, Hatred, Strife, Persecutions*, and the like.

2. It will propogate and promote Love and Candor one towards another.

3. It will cause our Dissenting Observers to Incline to us, or to fear us, at least to be hopeless of our downfall by divisions.

4. It will tend not only to Peace and Order amongst us, as a civil community, but so unite our Interest, as to strengthen the whole body Pollitick, and render it great and powerful, very fairly capable to resist the Insolency of a Forreign Foe.

In short, it tends to bring us under the Blessing of God, and the Accomplishment of the happy Promises of the latter days; for

or upon this Hill of *Zion* ſhall there be Bleſſings for evermore, and under ſuch an Agreement it is that nothing ſhall hurt nor deſtroy, but the *Lamb, the Lyon, and Sucking Child ſhall lie down together* and reſt *in Peace*, &c. which we conſider with this Argument.

6. *Arg.* That which lays a hopeful Foundation for the happineſs and proſperity of the whole Creation, the joyful Accompliſhment of Gods bleſſed Promiſes, and that conduces to the Peace and Order of that Community in which we live, is all Mens undoubted Duty; but ſuch a Condeſcention and Compliance contended for, carries all thoſe good things in the bowels of it: *Ergo*, it ought to be conſented to and purſued.

7. *Arg.* That which tends to the moſt Incouragement of a Painful and pious Miniſtry is, a Chriſtians undoubted Duty, but to hear them, to make a full Aſſembly under them, to carry it with ſweetneſs, moderation, and condeſcenſion, and ſubmiſſion, towards them, and in a Friendly, and Chriſtian ſort to Converſe with them, tends much to their Incouragement: *Ergo*, 'tis an undoubted Duty.

We ſhall leave this Argument to ſtand upon its own Legs, and if any do doubt whether ſome Miniſters of the Church of *England* be painful and pious, we may conclude that ſuch are either ſottiſh, ſenſeleſs, or diſtracted; and that to ſuch a degree too, that it may be counted a Petty Miracle to cure them: but though a Miracle it be, we will not deſpair of it, but prepare a Medicine for a fit opportunity.

8. *Arg.* There where there is moſt ſound and good knowledg to be had, and no reſtraint laid upon *Perſons Holineſs*; 'tis our duty to adhere there.

But with ſome Miniſters of the Church of *England* there is moſt ſound and good Knowledg to be had, and no reſtraint laid upon the other, *Ergo*.

The Major is unqueſtionable, the Minor we evidence after this manner.

1. There *is greater Learning amongſt them than the generality of others.*

2. They *have better opportunity to attend upon it and improve it, being taken off from ſecular Affairs by a national and comfortable proviſion for their Families.*

3. They *are perſons of known Worth and Integrity, that do imploy their time well to gain the beſt knowledge, and daily every week to diſpenſe it, not to deceive but to profit the people.*

4. *Their Doctrine of the Nature and Attributes of God, the certain-*

ty of a future State, or blessed Immortality, the Divine Authority of the Scripture, the force of natural Religion, duly limited and extended: to which I may add a fifth (Viz.)

5. The *Able, Learned, and Convincing Management of Controversies against the Romanists, with which let the Non-conformists* compare if they can.

9. *Arg.* Where Popery is best refuted, and the Designs of our grand Adversary in respect of that and other Projects, most defeated, there it is Duty to adhere.

But with some Ministers of the Church of *England* 'tis so, *Ergo.*

Major. The Maior is unquestionable, the Minor we refer to two things for Illustration: First,

1. The Remarkable Disputes and Sufferings in the former *Marian* days, and the no less renowned Discourses and Sermons in these our present days.

2. With the consideration of the *Illiteracy of most Nonconformists* in the Kingdom, and their *unskilfulness* to deal with the subtil Jesuits, may sufficiently clear up the Minor Proposition. And if any shall dis-believe, let us make an Experiment, take two or three Mechanicks in a Town, and put to these so many Priests and Jesuits to Dispute, and what fearful Baffling work will they make with these *poor Mechanicks*, or *Lay-Preachers*: The truth is, 'tis easie to conceive of it, even to a Conclusion without a trial; what brave work should we have, if at this day he who is counted a Champion amongst the Non-conformists, should be singled out to manage a Controversie, and to maintain the Protestant Cause against the Church of *Rome*. For who is or can be so blind in his Intellects, as not to see how a good Cause would be miserably baffled, trampled upon, and lost by the weakness, self-conceitedness, and folly of such a dull headed blundering.

10. *Arg.* Where Order is most observed, and the best Works of Charity performed, there is a Duty to adhere, but with the Ministry of the Church of *England* 'tis so, *Ergo.*

The Major stands well upon all it's Feet: The Minor we give *Two Instances* to clear up. 1st. In respect of the Ministers. 2dly. In respect of the Poor. In respect of the Ministers, we *offer four things.* 1. Their Order to prepare them for the Ministry. 2dly. To prove them. 3ly. To Institute or Ordain them. 4ly. To incourage and maintain them.

1. To prepare them, They have many Schools of Learning fur-

furniſhed and provided with Grave, Able and Learned Maſters and Doctors, to educate them in Good Manners, and to teach them all the *uſeful parts* of Learning *needful* for the Miniſtry.

As *Firſt*, How they ſhall prove the body of Scripture to be Canonical. *Secondly*, And how to prove it in all the main and ſubſtantial Parts of it to be rightly Tranſlated. *Thirdly*, How to anſwer quirks and ſophiſmes that are brought againſt it. *Fourthly*, How to diſpute Intelligibly and Convincingly for it and from it.

2. To try or prove them, they have not onely their Maſters, Doctors and Tutors, to Teach them, but they have their Collegiats to put Interogatories and Critiſmes to them: Thirdly, They have their Set-times for Diſputations and Proof of their Abilities, which is very uſeful and convenient for them.

3. For their Inſtitution and Ordination, they have,

1. Perſons of Ripe Age, Great Learning, and Much Experience, to come before, who have Power and Parts to examine and try their Fitneſs; and accordingly to proceed to Inſtitute or Reject them.

2. They have afterwards Congregations to Preach before, for their Approbation or Diſlike; and if they ſhall be found fit to paſs an Induction, then there is a comfortable Support and Maintenance for them, to incourage and carry them on in their Work. Now of *this Uſeful Order there is in a manner, a total vacancy amongſt the Non-conformiſts.*

1. For Firſt, They have no Schools for Learning, no Learned Men to attend upon the Education and Teaching of Youth; not one in ten able to prove any ones Fitneſs, nor no Maintenance for them, in caſe found Fit, ſcarce a Man to be found that is able to Vindicate his Religion againſt an Adverſary.

Therefore they permit weak ſouls to run up and down a preaching of their own heads, and thoſe that have any tollerable parts tired out with hard labour, requiring work when they allow them little or nothing to eat; and *thus it is with many Non-conformiſts about the Countrey.*

2. And *for the Poor*, 'tis evident that they are better provided for under the Miniſters of the Church of *England* than elſewhere; for there is not only Officers yearly choſen to take care of them, but Money duly exacted and a *Law provided to force it from the covetous, for the uſe of the poor.* Now to maintain the Miniſters, and ſecondly the Poor well, is the *beſt work of charity in a civil community*: and

thus we make good our Minor Propoſition, and proceed to another Argument.

11 *Arg.* Where the beſt Example is given, 'tis a Duy to Adhere; but with ſome Miniſters of the Church of *England* is the beſt Example given: Ergo, there 'tis a Duty to Adhere. To clear the Minor we will briefly inſtance in *theſe Four things*,

1. The admiting Miniſters to Preach.

2. The hearing of Miniſters of different Opinions in Private Points.

3. In Preſerving the Credit of the Party.

4. In their Common Carriage and Behaviour.

The Non-conformiſts, many of them, will admit no Man to Preach that is not Baptized into the ſame Severe Strain with themſelves about Election, Reprobation, Irriſiſtable Decree, and the like, whereas the other are Large and Charitable; they inſiſt not upon theſe niceties as neceſſary qualifications, but admit Men of Worth, *though in theſe things differing*, and therein better in their Example, and more deſerving Imitation.

The Non-conformiſts many of them, will not hear a Man, let his Parts or Worth be what it will, if *differing from them in ſome Things which they call Principles* and *the Diſcipline of their Way*; nay, *they hold it unlawful ſo to do*, let the *conveniency or opportunity be what it will*: And therefore they will not hear any Miniſters of the Church of *England*, though never ſo well Qualified. Some Miniſters of the Church of *England* are of a more Large, and Noble, and Generous Principle, therefore better in their Example.

The *Non-conformiſts will ſuffer Men differing from them, to be* unjuſtly Abuſed, Stigmatized and Reproached, and lie under theſe loads of Injuries Five, Six, Seven Years together, without Relief or Deliverance, though it be earneſtly begged for. The other will endeavour to preſerve the Credit of their Brethren, and if an Accuſation or Reproach lieth againſt them, will vouchſafe them a Speedy Tryal, and a Juſt Deliverance; therefore better in their Examples.

The *Non-conformiſts in their Common Carriage are very Surly and Dogged, Sowre and Moroſe*, they will not ſpeak to a Perſon differing from them, if they meet him in the Street, Houſe or Shop, they turn their back upon him; hardly bid him ſit down if he comes where they have to do; they will Kick, Spurn, Back-bite, and *if poſſible*, Blaſt his Reputation for ever. Whereas the other *are Affable*,

ble, Gentle, very Courteous and Complaisant, of a Sweet Behaviour and Winning Carriage, much more Becomming the Gospel, and Worthy of Imitation.

12. *Arg.* Where the best Doctrine is preached as well as the best Example given, there it is Duty to Adhere.

But by some Ministers of the Church of *England* is the best Doctrine preached as well as the best Example given; Ergo, there it is Duty to Adhere. The Major Proposition excels the Strength of *Alexander the Great*, being not to be Conquered: The Minor we shall make good by this following Parallel.

The Doctrine of many *Non-conformists*, that I use to hear, hath been to set forth God to be a vehement, rigid, and severe Being, ready to take advantage, nay to make them rather then fail; instancing the Epistle of *Jude*, that some are made to be taken and destroyed, and that *Esau* with the generality of others were hated by him that made them, without respect to any cause on their parts; intimating the unmercifulness of God to the most part of Man-kind, making of them with a design to damn them, with the implacableness of his Soul, against the interest and happiness of theirs, the concurrency of his Atributes in contriving their eternal Misery, the peremptory shutting them out from all benefit by the death of his Son (in point of Salvation) the resolute reprobating them from Eternity as an Arbitrary Act of his own Will, the delight he will take to see them roul in the Flames of Hell, yea to see little Infants lie gasping in unquenchable Fire, that never sinned against him; but because *Adam* did thousands of years before they were born; of a *strange Law*, he hath without any consideration of a compliance with him to a very few, and that too, when they are in the highest Acts of Rebellion against him (as *if he*

The Doctrine of the Ministers of the Church of England *is commonly of the Divine Existency, the goodness of Gods Nature, the Excellency of his Attributes, the Doctrine, Vertue, and Example of our blessed Saviour, the necessity of a good Life, and Mens working out their own Salvation, the clear consistency of* Moses *Morals with Christs constant Doctrine, the fair possibility of all mens being saved by the Mercy of a blessed God, and the help of a mighty Mediator, of Mans duty and possibility to please God, and make his works and actions sweet and delightful to his Maker, with more of the like import.*

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was a perfect Humourist) of the impossibility to do any thing that God requires of us, and that because we are all as dead (whilst we are alive) as a stock or a stone, or as a Mechanick, had it lately in his Pulpit, as dead *as a Corpse that lies by the walls in a Coffin ready for Burial*; that there is no necessity of Obedience to please God: or work out our own Salvation: nay as one Mr. *B*— phrased it not long since in a Pulpit, it *is Devillish, yea Witchcraft and Sorcery, for any to Preach up doing for the obtaining Life and Salvation*, and *that love to God himself is not necessary to a mans being saved*: No, nothing at all but hearing (such as he is Preach) and only believing (what they say) (and nothing else) and *the reason given for this Doctrine is*, because God loves them with a special love, while Grand Rebels and Traitors against him; and Salvation was wrought out for them by another many years ago wholly without them, or respect to any thing, that they should, or can do. And the greatest sin they can possibly commit will not bring their Salvation into any hazard, neither ought they to think so; and that the best Duties the best of Men can perform, are to God as filthy rags are to a Man loathsome and abominable. That the reason why men live and die in disobedience, is, because God did not chuse them, nor allow sufficient help for their deliverance and relief, and that the Law of God leads Men from Faith and Christ; of Extacies, Enthusiasms, extraordinary Assistances and the like, that (*'tis believed*) *none but themselves do experience, of anothers doing* all their work for them that is required of them, and imputing of it to them, as if they had done it themselves: *And by this way of Transmission of Actions they are justified from all sins past, present, and to come, yea, and some of them do believe* that these justified Souls *are more Righteous than the Angels themselves*, even equally *Righteous to the Son of God himself*, who did die for them, so *that their works are done to their hand*, that God looks down upon them (*howsoever he may deal with others*) as persons not guilty of the least sin, but as the *Chief Darlings of Heaven*, that *have all the Personal Acts of Christ conferred upon them* and *imputed to them*; *so that God may as well charge Christ with sin, as these shining Saints*: with abundance of such strange, groundless, unscriptural strains, which is *such a System of Divinity, as inevitably draws these horrible consequences along with them.*

1. To render God a most unlovely Being, not onely humoursome and partial, but more cruel than men: One that commands im-

impoſſible things, and then damns to Eternity (and *that with delight* too) for non-performance.

2. They render Man a ſtone that cannot move one ſtep towards the anſwering the End of his Creation.

3. The Goſpel *a meer fable*, that it is impoſſible to be obeyed, and there is no neceſſity for it, with more of ſuch aſtoniſhing ſtuff, enough to make all ingenious beings to hate and deſpiſe God; for who can love him if it ſhould be believed that he is as they ſet him forth to be: *the truth is, ſuch Doctrines have a tendency to ſcare the whole World, and drive People out of their right Minds, to make the whole Army of Beelzebub to laugh and contemn all Religion and Devotion*, and thoſe that are credulous to *turn down right Ranters*; and *if there were no more but their crude and indigeſted Doctrines, may it not be ſufficient to warrant mens leaving them:* and their adhering to more wholſome and ſound Doctrine, by which they may be made more wiſe and good. And may not all Pious Souls daily make this their Litany, *From ſuch Doctrine and ſuch Divinity, Good Lord deliver us*, &c. And ſo we come to another Argument.

13. *Arg.* That which renders Men truly Wiſe and Noble, of a Generous and Charitable Mind and Temper, which tends to break their Bonds of Slavery under which they have been long captivated, and to free their Conſciences from Groundleſs Scruples, is Mens *undoubted duty*; but to adhere to ſome Worthy Miniſters of the Church of *England* is the ready way to all this, Ergo.

The Major is at its journies end already, having both Plain Scripture and the Higheſt Reaſon to reſt upon, and doubtleſs it may be numbred amongſt the ſelf evident principles, and placed next or cloſe by that Sacred Text, *Phil.* 4. 8. which tells us that *whatſoever things are juſt, honeſt, and of good report*, i. e. *or venerable, we are tied to practiſe and purſue them.*

The Minor will come ſafe to its Journies end alſo, with the help *of theſe following Conſiderations.*

1. They are Men of moſt Noble and Generous Principles, as any be in the World, as will ſoon appear to any that ſhall hear their Sermons, or read their Books.

2. They are Men of Profound Knowledge, being skilled in all the uſeful parts of Learning, and therefore fairly capable of reducing Men from the Error of their ways, and planting good Notions and Principles in the rooms of them.

3. Their Methods are ſo Apt, Grave and Admirable; their Stile

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ſo Taking and Excellent, their Words ſo fit for their Matter, and ſuited to their Purpoſes, that they *ſeem to be Oracles to our weak and unlearned Mechanicks*: And our frequent hearing of them would make us aſhamed to hear the other, as *I do profeſs ſince I have allowed my ſelf a little liberty to hear the Miniſters aforeſaid, I have been greatly aſhamed to think how ill I have ſpent my time to ſit under the preaching of pitious weak Souls of the other ſide, and am not at all pleaſed to ſee well-meaning People expoſe themſelves to ſuffering for ſo ill a work.* Shall good People through miſtakes, ſuffer the Loſs of their Goods, the Impriſonment of their Perſons, and the Ruin of their Families, for hearing a little dull non-ſenſe, contradiction, confuſion, *oft-times bla[ſ]phemy preached? I ſay God forbid. This is neither Wiſe nor Noble, Generous nor Charitable, towards themſelves or others.* I do demand now of any Man, what comfort a Chriſtian can take if he ſhould loſe all his Eſtate in the World, yea and his Life to boot (*which I beſeech God may never come,*) becauſe he will not hear a good Man of the Church of *England* preach a good Sermon, *when 'tis proved not only to be no ſin, but alſo by clear circumſtances made a duty?* Shall this Man be admired by his Friends, and canonized for a Martyr by the Church? Shall it not rather be ſaid he died like *Abner*, or threw away his life in deſpight to his duty? And may it not be ſaid to ſuch, *Who hath required this at your hands*, to be *ſo prodigal of your blood, as to ſacrifice it to your own humour*, and in *oppoſition to duty and conveniency both, to go untimely out of the World?* Methinks it would be a good work to undeceive ſuch, and deliver them from their Miſtakes, that they might be free'd from their Sufferings, and eaſed in their Conſciences; and do *heartily wiſh that ſome Perſon or Perſons, one or more, whoſe Parts and Capacity in the World render them capable, would ſuddenly undertake ſuch a good good and charitable work*, the effect of which (*I do ſtrongly imagine*) would be Peace to the State, eaſe to the Weak Brethrens Conſciences, and ſafety to their Perſons and Eſtates; *having much ground to believe that there is more to be done upon them, by cogent Arguments*, than perſonal Scourges.

4. Their Converſe and common Society, is ſo teaching and inlarging in the way of good Principles, a noble Liberty, a generous Comprehenſion, an honourable Charity and Condeſcenſion towards other Chriſtians that differ from them, *That would our weak Mechanick Brethren but allow themſelves ſome ſpare time to be in their company, I doubt not but they would find the walls of* Jericho *ſoon to ſhake and tumble*;

tumble; I mean those penurious Notions, and groundless Scruples that keeps them from (*nay that concludes it a sin*) to associate with, and adhere unto any but *their own party, which is assureatly a great wrong and prejudice to their own Souls, that doth very much effeminate and debase them*: For by this means they may come to see by *an easie Rule of Comparison*, the weakness and insufficiency of those that they formerly adhered to and admired, together with the great worth and value that is in the other, whom they before so slighted and esteemed as the *Sons of Beelzebub, the Merchants of Babylon*, or at best, but the *broken Army of Magog*; the sight and understanding of which will (*I doubt not,*) be an *effectual* means to *cure them of that Distemper*, which for the extravagancy of it may be called a *Vertigo* or *Culenture*. Much more might I add to this *Argument*, but for making of our Discourse tedious, I shall therefore end it by an approach to its next Neighbour.

14. *Arg.* That which hath a clear tendency to keep up and maintain the Honour and Good Order, and consequently to prevent the Confusion and Dishonour of a Famous and Flourishing Kingdom (in which we live) is the *Natives undoubted Duty*.

But to withdraw from the Weak, Loose, and Illitterate Ministry of the *Non-conformists*, and to adhere to, incourage and keep up the Able, Grave, and Learned Ministry of the Church of *England*, hath a clear tendency thereunto; Ergo, *'tis their undoubted Duty*.

The Major is currant coyn that none will gain-say, The Minor may easily be made passable with all (*except such as are blinded with pride, prejudice, or great Ignorance*) by the Consideration of these following Particulars.

Con. 1. It *tends greatly to the* Confusion and Dishonour of a Kingdom, for it to be influenced by Weak, Shallow, Illiterate, and Inconsiderate men.

Con. 2. That *the generality of the Mechanick Non-conformist Preachers are such.*

Con. 3. That *it tends highly to advance the Good Order and Honour of a Kingdom*, to have it Influenced by Able, Grave, and Learned Men.

Con 4. That *such do most abound, and we are most certain to have them in the Ministry of the Church of* England.

The clearing of these Four Propositions *I hope will* make our Minor go for currant pay amongst (*my Brethren*) the Non-conformists themselves.

To the First of these, That it tends greatly to the Confusion and Dishonour of a Kingdom, to be influenced by such as aforesaid, *appears from hence.*

1. They are not able to march with others of our Neighbouring Nations, if there should be occasion or necessity for it; Let any Man resolve me, in case Learned Persons should be sent to us from other States and Princes, to Treat with us about Religion or other Affairs of State, where should we pick out a competent number of Men from amongst the Mechanick Tribe, that would be able to match with them, and *if not*, as it appears to be so at the *first sight*, would it not then be a great dishonour to a Renowned Nation to have such bear Sway.

2. If the Nation should be Influenced by such Men (*as the flocking to them, and leaving the other, tends thereunto*) then down goes our Schools of Learning the Famous Universities, and not only so, but down goes our Churches, and Publick Meeting Places, which *are the best conveniencies for Solemnizing of Gods Publick Worship.* As I knew a Mechanick Preacher once, that wished that all the Parish Churches in *England* was of one intire Body, and that he was able with a Cable to draw them into the Sea, he would do it though he perished with them: (*An excellent piece of Zeal to think that he should do God good service in sacrificing his life, to bring infamy and dishonour upon his Native Country.*)

'Tis too common for people to despise that they are short (and unworthy) of themselves.

And perhaps a War betwixt Land-lords and Tenants which hath the best Right to their Revenues.

And this is not all neither, but then down goes the Ministers Maintenance; and *not only so*, but then up comes whole swarms of Mechanick Preachers from the Markets and Fairs, from their Benches and Shop-boards, to the Pulpit; then out goes the Men of the best Judgments to sigh in corners for the desolation of *Israel*, and in flocks the silly sort to sit and shake their heads, to beat their breasts, to turn up their eyes, and admire at the raising up of these babes and sucklings to Preach Contradiction and Nonsense, and *what can these things end in but disorder, confusion, and dishonour to a Kingdom:* I might inlarge here but I spare the weak.

2. That many of the Mechanick *Non-conformists* are such, *appears by these following Instances.*

1. They *decry Learning*, calling of it the Wisdom of the Flesh, account it the Merchandize of *Babylon*, whereas there is nothing more evident than that it is a great Accomplisher of Men, and the Glory of a Kingdom.

2. They

2. *They trample upon Tradition*, and affirm that a belief grounded thereupon, is not available in point of Salvation, and that the use of any thing derived from thence is unlawful in the matters of Religion, and therefore *Oh what outcries have we in their Preachments against the Traditions of Men.*

When as there is no way imaginable for these Men to prove the Sacred Scriptures to be Canonical, but by the help thereof, nor to make one Prayer, or Preach one Sermon, but they must use the Tradition of Men; *for if they say* but *Our Father which art in Heaven*, did they not learn the very form of words as well as the sense and understanding of them from Men, and are *not those Prayers conveyed by a succession of Tradition from one Generation to another?* How else came we by it? If they make use of a Sentence in Manuscript, of a passage in History, of a Testimony, or Report from others; *this is still Tradition* either oral, or written, as they are *usually distinguished.* Nay, these Men cannot take a Text of Scripture to Preach from, but they must make use of the Traditions of Men; for *was not the transcribing of them from the first Copies a Tradition?* Was not the Printing of them afterwards a *Tradition*, and was not the Translating of them afterwards a *Tradition*, and was not the dividing of them into Chapters and Verses a *Tradition*, and was not the binding of them up in convenient Volumes a *Tradition*, yea a *Humane Invention and Tradition?* How then shall these Men so much as handle the Bible to Preach without the use of Traditions, and *must we notwithstanding all this cry out against Traditions, and amuse our Ignorant Hearers about Tradition, and fright them from all Preachers* but our selves, *with a noise of Tradition?* And from whence comes this, but *from downright Ignorance and Illiteracy.*

3. But Thirdly, It is not Tradition alone that meets with this hard usage from these unskilful Men (*whose wrath is heavy*) but *even Reason it self* that is an Oracle of God, an universal Rule to Mankind, and so *necessary and essential to all* Faith *and* Religion, *as that there can be none without it.* This noble and renowned Soul falls under the same misfortune with its good old Friend and Neighbour Tradition: Oh! What Clamours have we raised against it, calling of it *Carnal Reason, Corrupted Reason, Blind Guide*, and what not, and blows struck ready to break the Pulpit, that they may thump it down sufficiently; and when they have done all, must be forced to confess, *That 'tis the great Governour and Settler of Hu-*

mans Affairs, and that there is no knowing of God or Understanding the Scriptures without it. I could name who declar'd it Blasphemy, and endeavoured to raise a most horrible Persecution against a Christian, for affirming, That Reason was Essential to Faith and Religion; and endeavour'd what in them lay to ruin both Body and Soul, *for that very Crime*; and that without a fair and equal Trial: but *how these* Men would buy, or sell, borrow, or lend, teach, or learn, prepare a Sermon, and Preach it without it, *I would willingly be informed if they would do* me that kindness; but from those Masters of Arts that are the Impugners of Reason, let us be delivered for ever and ever. *Amen.*

4. They tolerate Men uncapable of the former, and very defective in the latter. Such whose Learning never made them capable of reading with a distinct and proper pronounciation.

5. They slight, undervalue and reject Men of the best Parts and Learning in the Land, *as might be made appear, not only* by the surly Carriages they shew towards them, *but* by shunning their Company, and at all times refusing to hear them; *And now let all men judge what order and honour that Nation is like to be clothed with, where such are Predominant.*

6. The Factions, Divisions, and Confusions that are amongst themselves, *evidently shew* how wise and learned they are, and what honour it would be to the Kingdom to be influenc'd by them. For to set aside more private Disorders, *We have them that are open to the sight of the Sun,* (viz.) Forty distinct Sects, some say twenty at least, others say each one blaming the Church State for it self, as if one Worshipped the Sun, another the Moon, another *Mahomet*, another Jesus, and another his own fancy: and *what all this would amount to, is easily guest at*, if they should prevail to Influence the Kingdom. But of this enough, I wish it otherwise.

3. *Prop.* That it highly tends to advance the Honour and good Order of a Kingdom, to have it Influenced by Able, Grave, and Learned Men.

If this Proposition was not clear at first, now it might be made so by many Instances; as *Jethro's Counsel to Moses* to chuse out such for his Assistance: The *Psalmist* Advises all to it that sit at Sterne; *Psal.* 1. And the *Prophet Malachy* tells us, That the *Priests* lips should preserve Knowledg, and that Men should seek the Law at their Mouths. And it is a Brand of Infamy fixt upon *Israel* of old, *that they made Priests of the lowest of the People*; that is, persons of effeminate

feminate Spirits, light Wits, and great want of Learning. And our Saviour himself seems to reflect upon *Nicodemus*, because he was a Ruler in *Israel*, and was unlearn'd in, and unskill'd about the most necessary and important point of Religion, (*viz.*) The Reformation of a Mans Heart and Life. The Apostle St. *Paul* Reflects dishonour upon the *Corinthians* for want of Wisdom, Learning, and Gravity, to keep Peace and good Order in the *Church*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 5. And was it not an honour to *Egypt* that they had *Joseph* with them to teach their Senators Wisdom, and set good Order amongst them. Was it not an honour to *Israel* that they had *Solomon* a Wise, Learned, and Judicious Prince over them, and Subordinates suitable unto him? Did they not then become the admiration and dread of all the Nations round about? And indeed if we speak of the *Honour of a Nation, properly it consists chiefly in these two things:*

1. The Approbation of God. 2. The Reverence and Dread of other Nations; and *these are both accomplished by the Conduct and Influence of Prudent and Learned Men:* For such a Nation God will Plant and not pluck up, make the Head and not the Tail; where he finds Men of Wisdom and Judgment, to do right, and execute Justice in the Gate. And such a Nation shall have the Reverence and Dread of all its Neighbours round about. And it may be said of them who are under the Conduct and Influence of Wise and Learned men, *Happy are the people that are in such a case.* But on the contrary, to such as are under weak, shallow, and illiterate, Wo be to thee, O Land, when thy Priests and Rulers are such. More might be spoken upon this Subject, but that we fear to exceed.

4. *Prop.* That such do most abound, and we are most certain to have them in the Ministry of the Church of *England*: For the clearing of this, the experience of many years tells us, That out of the Ministry of the Church of *England*, we have had Men fit to Preach before great and mighty Princes, the High Courts of Parliament, the Grave and Reverend Judges of the Realm, the Magistrates and Courts of Aldermen in great Cities and Corporations; *yea* their Learning and Education hath been such *as hath rendred them fit to be Councellors of State*, to give Advice to Princes, and to go Ambassadors upon Grand Messages (for their Countries good) into foreign parts. *But where have any arose out of the Mechanick Preachers of the Non-conformists?* And is not this for the honour of a Nation (where Science shall so flourish) that a sort, or rank of Men, which commonly is below the Gentry in point of Descent, should by Learning and good Education become able to deliver

God's

Gods Meſſage to their Princes and Rulers, and their Princes Ambaſſages to foreign States: and would not all this be loſt if the Nation ſhould be ſuffered to loſe it's Learning, and to be immerſed into dull and clowniſh Illiteracy? And would not the loſs of theſe bring inevitable Confuſion and Diſhonour to a Nation? And if any be otherwiſe minded; I ſhall *leave it upon them* to pauſe and conſider, and ſhall be ready to undertake to Convince them upon a fit opportunity, *&c.* We ſhall but barely lay down two Arguments more, and ſo come to the laſt Propoſition.

15. *Arg.* We raiſe from the Cuſtom, Settlement, or Conſtitution of a Kingdom, which in it ſelf is neither ſinful, nor inconvenient; nor hath the leſſer part of a people any juſt right to alter it: and that we frame thus, *Whatſoever hath been* the ancient Cuſtom, and *is*, for the preſent Settlement and beſt State, the Conſtitution of a Kingdom, not being in it ſelf evil or inconvenient, is *the Members undoubted Duty to ſubmit unto?* But ſuch an Adhering, or Compliance, contended for, hath been the ancient Cuſtom, is for the preſent Settlement and beſt *Laws*, the Conſtitution of this Kingdom: *Ergo*, It oughtto be done. Inlargement upon this we forbear.

16. *Arg.* Is taken from *the Laws of Prudence*, in reſpect of our ſelves and Families, *which we thus offer:*

Whatſoever tends to the Wellfare, Settlement, and Security of our Selves and Families, and to prevent ſuffering prejudice and ruin, being in it ſelf neither ſinful nor inconvenient, is *Chriſtians undoubted Duty.* But ſuch an Adhering and Compliance aforeſaid, hath ſuch a happy and comfortable tendency: *Ergo.* The Inlargment upon this we wave alſo for the reaſon aforeſaid, and come to the laſt Propoſition, namely, that *it is a very great conveniency.*

Laſt Prop. Touching the Conveniency of it, we ſhall be exceeding brief now, and leave a fuller diſcuſſion thereof to another Seaſon (*in caſe it ſhould appear needful.*)

1. *Firſt*, Then there is in ſuch a Compliance contended for, the Anſwer of a good Conſcience in obedience to that great Apoſtolical Rule of being ſubject to the higher *Powers*, *Rom.* 13. 1. *Titus* 3. 1. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13.

2. There will be not only a freeing the Magiſtrate from Fears, Jealouſies and much trouble, *but alſo* a procuring from him favour and a good opinion, which is a conveniency not to be ſlighted.

3. *There will be* a Freedom from a needleſs charge in contributing to the Maintenance of weak and ſilly Men, who careleſly leave either

their Civil Callings (and *expose their Families to ruin and decay, and to depend upon others to be provided for*) under a pretence of being call'd to Preach, *when God knows they do not understand their* A B C *in* Religion, can hardly speak common sense, and are so far from being able to convince Critical Gain-sayers, *as that they know not* how to teach the Ignorant, or to form one right intelligible Notion of Points Fundamental; nay *such they are as often Preach* Non-sense, Confusion, and sometimes Blasphemy; for the *clearing of which I will appeal to all impartial Men*, whether such Men as have not a faculty or habit of knowledg, suited to so great an Undertaking, as to Preach the Gospel, and become Ambassadors for the King of Heaven to the Souls of Men. 2. That have not Books to read to help to fit them and prepare them. 3. That do not allow themselves time to Study (*and this is the case of many of our Mechanick Preachers*) I say whether it be at all likely that these men should be fit to Preach. Alas! that great Precept of St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, Study to shew thy self approved, is not in their Creed or Kalender: At least, little taken notice of, or regarded by them; *though all wise men know there is unspeakable need of it*, &c.

4. *In the Bowels* of this *Compliance* there is a freeing our selves from *a groundless unwarrantable Suffering*, which every true Christian should carefully shun; *not only* for the sake of themselves and Families, *but for the honour of the Religion they profess*; which is expos'd to contempt, when the Professors of it turn giddy, and suffer *for they know not what.*

5. *It tends much* to the uniting of all Persons of the best Parts amongst the respective Parties, in Order to the making their Councils unanimous, and their Endeavours prosperous against a threatning Enemy.

6. *There is a laying a Foundation*, not only for the shutting out of those that are weak and insipid Men, sometimes made use of to fill up a vacancy, but also for the taking in of such that have good natural Parts that hitherto have lain out, and improving them for Publick Imploy: which tends much to the rendring the Protestant Interest the *more Formidable* against its Foes.

7. *It tends best to Propagate the Gospel to Future Generations*, for the Ministry of the Church of *England* is best provided to train up a Nursery for the defence of the Gospel in time to come, which would be in imminent danger of being lost, if it should be wholly left to the *Non-conformists*: for,

They

They have neither Men of Learning to educate, nor fit Schools or Places to retain, nor Maintenance whereby to sustain the respective Masters and Scholars, that the Honour of the Nation, as well as the Propagating of Religion, doth require, If *any shall be so weak and wild at this time*, *as to object that we must trust God for the Spirit to make Ministers*: the answer is ready.

1. That there is none so weak, so wild and extravagant, as those Preachers that pretend most to Inspiration (*as could be made appear beyond all contradiction*,

2. Where God affords a sufficiency of ordinary means, there 'tis presumption to expect extraordinary assistances.

3. The giving up our selves to such a groundless trust, is the next way to (turn *Mugletonians* and) beget a new strain of Enthusiasts, the *Vanity of whose Inspirations hath been sufficiently manifest to this Age*.

4. In Case God Almighty should be pleased to let out more of his spirit amongst us, *unless it be as in the days of the Apostles*, to inable us immediatly to speak with tongues, there will still be need of good Education (*preparatory to the Ministry*) and that is like to be had no where else but in the Ministry of the Church of *England*: for as the *Non-conformists* have not done any thing hitherto, so they have made no provision for it for future times; *the defect of which must needs prove prejudicial to the Nation in general*, and to *the Protestant Cause in particular*: 1. To the Nation, in bringing of it under the reproach of an illiterate Nation. 2. in exposing of it to the baffles of its Enemies, who will easily insult over it, if there be no Men of a good education to withstand them. 3. To the Protestant Cause, if there be no Men found for the future, whose Learning renders them capable to defend it against the Intrigues and Subtilties *of its apt and well prepared Adversaries*: Now there is none can deny but that the Ministry of the Church of *England* doth act up more consonantly to the great Apostolical Rule given to *Timothy*, to commit Good Learning to Faithful Men, that they may transmit it to Posterity, than the *Non-conformists* do or can do, *&c.*

8. Tis *the ready way to have all those that are men of Good Genius's, Sound Intellects, and Clear Naturals*, whose Spirits incline to Peace, and an amicable Concord, *prefer'd to such suitable provision* as may render them capable to allow themselves time about Profitable Studies, tending to the good of the Nation and of many Souls in it.

9. 'Tis

9. *'Tis a good way to prevent that Sin of Tyranny and Unmercifulness* which hath too much abounded amongst some of the Non-conformists towards some of their Ministers: who have required them to Plow, and that upon severe Penalties too, Namely of their being confounded for not Improving their Talents, when there hath been no Provision made *to fodder these poor Oxen*, or keep them *alive in the World.*

10. *It tends much to the Incouragement* of a good Ministry, to have a peaceable People to dwell amongst, and a full Assembly to preach unto.

11. It *tends to the fulfilling of Scripture and answering of old Prophesies*, namely of Christians coming to be of one way, and one language, for universal good to themselves and Children.

12. *And Lastly, It will beget Love, increase Knowledge*, incourage Learning, *extirpate Ignorance, establish a Neighbourly Peace, dishearten our Enemies*, with multitude of the like Conveniencies, in *comparison of which those little* Shiboleths, *Characters* of Distinction and causes of Division, are *not worthy once to be named, or to come in remembrance.* Let us then (for the honour of God, the peace of the Nation, the good of our selves, and the love of all those conveniencies) not through Pride and Humour grow obstinate, and gain-say those things that so apparently tend, not only to the raising of our esteem and reputation with the best of our Neighbours here, but also will yield us much comfort in the day of Judgment hereafter, *when every man shall be rewarded according to his works.*

An Appendix.

READER, I intend this short Appendix shall supply the want of an Epistle, which is commonly design'd *to a fourfold usefulness.* 1. To Apologize for, and give Reasons of Mens Writing upon such or such a Subject. 2. To prevent mistakes in the Reader, that may be occasioned by the deficiency or shortness of the Author. 3. To excuse Errors, and beg pardon for them. 4. To give some particular or special Direction about the general Discourse. In all these respects I might say something. And First, Touching my Apology, I have this to say, 1. The Matter is good 2. The Design is honest. 3. The Age hath need of it. 4. Some do much

much desire it; and in reference to the Censorious, I shall only say thus much. 1. If I have done Evil, bear witness of that Evil. 2. He that is without Fault in such Respects, let him cast the first Stone. 3. Let me have a fair Trial before Judgment and Execution. 4. If it be an Error, it is a Reason of my Judgment, which I thought needful to go before my common practice. 5. If it be an Error, it makes for Peace, therefore the more pardonable. 6. I am willing to give Persons of a differing mind a peaceable meeting to debate it, *&c.*

And as touching the preventing of mistakes, I have this to say; that I would not be understood by any, as if my Reflection (in several places) upon the Non-conformists, is equally to be extended to *all that goes under that denomination, for indeed they are not so intended.* I well knowing that there are Men of great Learning and worthy Parts, who are such now upon some particular grounds, that have formerly been Ministers of the *Church of England* themselves; and happily may again, if one or two stumbling Blocks were removed, which are not so great as some Wise Men may imagine; these I say are wholly exempted from those Reflections, and not only these, but *some Mechanick Non-conformists* also; who are Men of good Tempers, and amicable, and charitable Behaviour, *who do frequently to their great satisfaction,* adhere to the Worthy Ministers aforesaid; they I say are not the Subjects of those Reflections, but as may at *several turns be observed, the design of themes* against the rigid, stingy, the ill-natured, sowre, morose and uncharitable, the weak, ignorant, dogmatical, and imposing, the wild extravagant and Antinomian, zealous, irregular and illiterate Non-conformists, *that prattle, and carries on pretences of Religion without fear or wit;* that *holds it unlawful to hear any but their own* Party, *or such that assimulate with themselves.* These wandering Stars, these Clouds without Water, that are stubbornly bent upon Faction and Division, and shews no ground for it, *by which they do miserably abuse others,* in *putting the name of Conscience upon it,* &c.

☞ And touching an excuse for Errors, be it known that it was written amidst of much Worldly business, which I was tied to manage, for the sake of my Family; and therefore for want of due time, 'tis possible Errors might pass, which if there have, I intend to acknowledge them when made manifest, and endeavour to make Reformation, and crave a pardon.

And

And for Direction about the whole, I say read it over two or three times, and then if you find nothing in it worth your time, *lay it aside for ever.*

A Postcript by way of Assertion, Supplication, and Deprecation, of a very late Writer, eminent for Primitive Piety, and Christian Prudence and Great Learning too, in the quaintness and gaitie of it: viz.

LET us of this Church and Nation consider, that as we certainly are (and without ostentation, or any secular interest be it spoken,) the most perfect and the sincerest part of the Catholick Church now existent, so we trust that it is the particular indulgence of Almighty God to keep us up to this our refinement by constant persecutions, to correct and abate our personal defects, but to confirm and make our Doctrines more illustrious, by the implacable oppositions of Phanatic rage and Jesuitic malice. And if we farther reflect on that *Unparallel'd Wisdom*, Learning, and Moderation, that most rational and substantial Piety, Charity, and Devotion of our Church; we shall be ready to acknowledge it highly expedient that, with St. *Paul*, we should have a *Thorn in the Flesh*, and be often under the buffetings of Satan, the designs and attempts of unreasonable and malicious Adversaries, *lest we should be puffed up*, 2 Cor. 12. 7. τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων, with our exceeding abundance of Revelations. And let our Enemies now destroy our Cities, let them burn down our Temples: if we cannot sing Praises under their Roofs, we will Repent under their Ashes; we will meet in Dens and Caves of the Earth, and by those obscurities, those stealths of Worship, render our Religion more Apostolical, more Primitive; yet will we set our *Moses* in the Gap, to see if peradventure, the Lord too will repent and turn away his displeasure from us: To this end we will humble and prostrate our selves, grow Pioneers in Devotion, and Countermine them in our Prayers, and should the *destroying Angel* be already come forth, should Judgement be already commissioned for our ruin, yet will we pray against the Decree, against the Predestination it self, and say, *Matt.* 26. 39. *Lord if it be possible let this Cup pass.* T. M. *M. A.*

Please to hear another Witness, but of another Nation, it being said, That in the Mouth of two or three, and you may have

two

two or three hundred, were it requisite) every word is established. It was the Assertion of a Wise Man (if general Experience and Memory make up one) who had lived in foreign parts with a Noble Contempt of great Preferment on the right hand and on the left, if he would have complied with, or, but connived at the Erroneous Posititions and Practices of Seducers: to all whom this real and resolute Reply was, that of St. *Peter* to *Simon Magnus*, *Thy Mony perish with thee*. N. B. τετραγωνος ἀνήρ. And yet wore in his Breast *Animum Catholicum*, that is a Soul ready to Communicate with all Christians, *Salva Veritate*; notwithstanding different in form of Discipline and outward Ceremonies; so far was he from the unseasonable, that I say not, unreasonable severity of some who presume to Non Church whole Churches for such Circumstantial Differences, as long as they hold the Substance of Christian Doctrine and Worship. For *Wise Men* do not think it safe to multiply Adversaries (of whome we have enough already, God knoweth,) we must be very wary to avoid the Mischief of an unnecessary Schism, which may harden the worst Adversaries in Heresy. It was I say, the Assertion of a Wise Man, who had *been without vanity, I have* (saith he) *through Gods Providence, travelled and taken an Impartial Survey of both the* Eastern and Western Churches, and *can assert upon mine own Experience, that in the* Eastern *Churches, the* Greeks, Armenians, *&c.* constantly observe *Common Prayer, or their daily Publick service of God: And in the* Western *Churches, and passing through* Germany (*to take the like Survey,*) *did with comfort behold the same Daily Publick Offices with* full Congregations, *in those they call the* Lutherans *and the* Calvinists; Dr. *Basire*.

F I N I S.

An Advertisement.

There will be upon this Subject, which will contain, viz.

A Sober Debate about Separation from the Church of England: *upon Three Questions:*

1. *Whether any person short of a Divine Call be warranted (publickly) to attempt the Alteration of a National and Publique Established Religion.*

2. *Whether the Church of* England *doth positively enjoyn any thing hazardous of Salvation.*

3. *Whether a Total Separation from her Communion be not a Schism in the worst Sense.*

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